

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 483
By Jackson

A RESOLUTION to create a special joint committee to study the use of tobacco and tobacco products by minors.

WHEREAS, although the smoking of tobacco products has declined significantly in the United States during the past thirty years, tobacco use remains a major societal problem in our nation; and

WHEREAS, scientific evidence has proven the many deleterious effects of tobacco use, from disease, including lung cancer and other forms of cancer, emphysema and hypertension, to nicotine addiction; and

WHEREAS, over the last ten (10) years, the federal government has revised the warning labels on cigarette packages and in advertising, required warning labels on smokeless tobacco products and increased excise taxes on cigarettes in an effort to reduce the incidence of tobacco use in our society; and

WHEREAS, although this effort has been largely successful, tobacco use among minors (generally, citizens under the age of eighteen (18) years) has actually increased, despite the fact that minors are prohibited from purchasing cigarettes and other tobacco products in every state; and

WHEREAS, a slight increase in U.S. smoking rates during the past five years reflects increased tobacco use among young people; and

WHEREAS, it is indeed alarming to discover that more than 3,000 U.S. teenagers become regular smokers each day, with girls smoking at a higher rate than boys; and

WHEREAS, the fact that ninety percent (90%) of smokers begin smoking before they reach the age of twenty-one (21) years, and sixty percent (60%) of smokers begin smoking before they reach the age of fourteen (14) years, demonstrates the incredibly addictive nature of tobacco and nicotine; and

WHEREAS, state legislatures have utilized various means to discourage and reduce tobacco use among minors; and

WHEREAS, because minors sometimes obtain cigarettes and other tobacco products through manufacturers' distribution of free product samples as part of advertising and promotional activities, many states have limited, or even prohibited, the distribution of such free tobacco product samples; and

WHEREAS, other states have limited the sale of tobacco products via vending machines; and

WHEREAS, because studies have demonstrated that each ten percent (10%) increase in the cost of cigarettes results in a four percent (4%) decline in consumption, several states have dramatically increased their tobacco excise taxes; and

WHEREAS, in addition to increased state revenue, it is anticipated that higher prices for tobacco products resulting from higher taxes will serve to discourage smoking and other tobacco use, especially among minors; and

WHEREAS, because tobacco use among young people continues to escalate, despite the trend of decreasing tobacco use among the general population, and because the health and welfare of our children is at stake, this General Assembly should carefully examine the aforementioned and other feasible legislative initiatives designed to discourage and reduce the smoking and other tobacco use by minors; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That there is hereby created a special joint committee to study the use of tobacco and tobacco products by minors and to propose legislation to discourage and reduce smoking and other tobacco use by minors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall be composed of three (3) members of the Senate and three (3) members of the House of Representatives, to be appointed by the respective speakers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the special joint committee upon request by the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the General Assembly. At its first meeting, the special joint committee shall elect a chair, vice-chair, and such other officers that the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That all legislative members of the special joint committee who are duly elected members of the General Assembly shall remain members of such committee until the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the special joint committee shall timely report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation or interim reports, to the One Hundredth General Assembly no later than February 1, 1997, at which time the committee shall cease to exist.

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